



TO: Members of the Fort Pierce Planning Board

THROUGH: Rebecca Grohall, AICP, Planning Director

FROM: Kori Benton, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: Blue Water Properties
 Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map Amendment – General Commercial (GC)
 Approximately 900 – 1190 Avenue O

DATE: February 8th, 2017

STAFF REPORT

Owners: Blue Water LLC.
 312 SE 17th ST Fl 2
 Fort Lauderdale, FL 33316

Representative: Amanda Martinez
 Martinez Planning Associates, LLC
 115 Citrus Park Circle
 Boynton Beach, FL 33436

Requested Action: Approval of a Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map Amendment from Low Density Residential (RL) and Conservation Open Space (COS) to General Commercial (GC).

Location: Approximately 900 – 1190 Avenue O

Parcel IDs: 2404-144-0000-000-9 & 2403-233-0002-000-3 (western 190 ft.)

Current Zoning: Single-family Moderate Density (R-3) & General Recreational Open Space (OS-1)

Proposed Zoning: General Commercial Zone (C-3)

Current Future Land Use: Low Density Residential (RL) and Conservation Open Space (COS)

Proposed Future Land Use: General Commercial Zone (C-3)

Surrounding FLU & Zoning:

North	East	South	West
RM	GC	COS/RL	COS

Parcel(s) Size: 4.42 & 1.57 acres

Staff Analysis:

The applicant is requesting the approval of a Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map Amendment, for 5.99 acres of property, to place the properties within the General Commercial (GC) land use district. The affected property is held between two (2) parcels of land, segmented by an unopened extension of 10th Street right-of-way, which the applicant is concurrently seeking abandonment of. The western parcel, representing 4.42 acres, is within the Low Density Residential (RL) district with a Single-family Moderate Density (R-3) zoning designation, and the affected segment of the eastern parcel is within the Conservation Open Space (COS) land use district, and General Recreational Open Space (OS-1) zone.

The applicant seeks approval of a concurrent request to amend the Zoning Atlas (Rezoning) from Single-family Moderate Density (R-3) & General Recreational Open Space (OS-1) to General Commercial (C-3) to align with the subject land use amendment.

The subject site is located on the south side of Avenue O between Ilois Ellis Park (12th Street) and the US Highway 1 corridor. The sites are predominantly covered with vegetation, including pine, oak, and palm trees, as well as palmettos. The remaining property, 6.88 acres, held by the applicant to the east is within the General Commercial, C-3 district. The applicant seeks to couple the properties, with a uniform General Commercial designation, to market the properties for commercial development along US Highway 1.

History

The entire property held by the applicant, 12.87 acres collectively, previously held a Future Land Use designation of RL, Low Density Residential and a zoning designation of R-3, Single-family moderate density residential until action by the City Commission in 1988 amended the land use and zoning of the eastern 8.45 acres. Ordinances I-293 & I-294 provided the existing General Commercial, C-3 designation for the eastern 6.88 acres abutting US Highway 1, while the remaining 1.57 acres of this parcel was placed within the General Recreational Open Space (OS-1) district to provide a buffer between the desired commercial development fronting US Highway 1, and the residential development and recreational park established to the west.

The applicant is seeking to further the extension of the General Commercial designation to provide greater opportunity to advance the property as a commercial hub, providing access to retail, grocery, and consumer services along the US Highway 1 corridor, accessible from mainland and island residents.

Proposed Amendments & District Comparison

Figure 1 presented the land holdings of the applicant, the current zoning and land use designations, and proposed amendments for the collective sites. The outcome sought would provide a uniform designation of General Commercial.



Figure 1

Table 1 demonstrates basic use standards for development capacity within the existing and proposed designations for the subject site.

Table 1: Existing and Proposed Site Data – Zoning & Land Use

Zoning	Existing		Proposed
	R-3	OS-1	C-3
Future Land Use (FLU)	RL	COS	GC
Non-Residential Maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) Permitted	-	.25	1.0
Maximum Lot Coverage Permitted	35%	40%	60%
Maximum Height	28 ft. / 35ft	35 ft.	65 ft.
Residential Density Allowance	1-6.5 du/ac	N/A	15 du/ac * Residential uses may comprise up to 20% of the total floor area of the General Commercial future land use designation.

As demonstrated in Table 1, the maximum permitted non-residential floor area ratio (FAR) for the subject properties would increase to allow an FAR of 1.0 under the proposed amendments. Additionally, the maximum permitted lot coverage (area covered by buildings) would increase to 60% under the proposed amendments, allowing for more intense development of the properties. The expanded development capacity pursued by the applicant is primarily for consideration of options such as grocery stores, retail sales and service, office uses, and restaurants. The General Commercial (GC) land use designation and General Commercial (C-3) districts also allow for vertical mixed-use development and sizable commercial users.

Table 2 demonstrates use type data for the existing and proposed land use designations for the subject site.

Table 2: Existing and Proposed Land Use Classifications

Existing	<p>Low Density Residential (RL): The Low Density Residential (RL) designation is intended for parcels that are best suited for lower density residential uses. The predominant development typology will consist of single family detached housing but can also contain duplexes and multifamily residences. Limited commercial uses intended to serve the neighborhood shall be allowed. Compatible public, quasi-public, and special uses including parks, churches, non-profit clubs, schools and daycare facilities shall also be allowed. This land use category ranges in density from 1 to 6.5 dwelling units per acre. This category combines the previously allowed Residential Suburban (RS), Residential Urban (RU) and Low Density Residential (RI) categories.</p> <p>Conservation and Open Space (COS): The Conservation and Open Space designation is intended to provide for the preservation, continued growth, and enhancement of the City’s rich resource of conservation areas, parklands, environmentally sensitive areas, recreational areas and open spaces. The designation provides for natural, managed and cultivated open space, including, natural parks, woodlands, habitat, floodplains, areas with permanent open space easements, greenways, and recreational facilities. This category combines the previously General Open Space (Os), Recreational Open Space (Osr), and Conservation Open Space (Osc) categories. This designation allows a maximum FAR of 0.25.</p>
Proposed	<p>General Commercial (GC): The General Commercial designation provides for higher intensity commercial developments or horizontal and vertical mixed-use developments. Uses allowed within this designation include multifamily residential, intensive and general commercial, retail, service, offices, tourist/entertainment facilities, hotels/motels, parks and recreation, along with compatible public, quasi-public, and special uses. This land use designation allows for a maximum density of 15 dwelling units per acre and a maximum FAR of 1.0. Development shall include either commercial or mixed uses fronting major roadway corridors with higher intensity near major intersections. Residential uses may comprise up to 20% of the total floor area of the General Commercial future land use designation.</p>

The land use designation amendment proposed modifies the development objective from residential and recreational open space to general commercial. The general commercial district provides an expansive variety uses, enabling a broad array of commercial activities, mixed-use situations, and increased enterprise concentrations when property size and infrastructure availability facilitate such development. The presented amendment creates the capacity to establish an extensive set of retail, entertainment, service, and even limited establishments. The coupled shift to the General Commercial (C-3) zoning district would additionally increases in maximum building coverage and height permitted.

The subject request encompasses an assemblage of land, a majority of which is presently designated General Commercial, seek to expand development capacity for commercial development. The applicant seeks increase prospects of promoting a commercial center strategically located between north and south causeways, adjacent to the Port of Fort Pierce, and accessible to adjacent residential areas.

Potential Traffic Impacts

The presented future land use amendment presents the capacity for an increase in traffic volume and impacts upon build-out. The extent of the traffic impacts and mitigation options for roadway improvements will be more definitively quantified at the site of development consideration. Avenue O is presented a two lane, undivided roadway, with design challenges associated with expanding capacity at its intersection with US Highway 1. Presently, Avenue O experiences traffic generation associated with established residential neighborhoods, proximity to Iloos Ellis Park, and its support linkage to Frances K. Sweet Elementary and Lincoln Park Academy. Preliminary analysis of development capacity of the subject property has been completed, and the applicant has identified conceptual mitigation options. Options include pursuit of designated turn lanes to access the site, connectivity to Avenue M to disperse assignment of trips generated, and possibly advance of a lighted intersection at US Highway 1, if development impacts would justify such consideration. Further evaluation, pursuant to the City's concurrency requirements, in coordination with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) will be necessary with the advance of a development plan for commercial activity.

Standards for Review

The following standards must be satisfied per Section 22-131 of the City Code prior to the approval of the requested amendment:

- (1) The amendment is consistent with the comprehensive plan;
- (2) The amendment will not have an adverse effect on the ability of the city to:
 - a. Satisfy land and water use needs; and
 - b. Meet transportation demands and provide community facilities and services; and
- (3) The amendment will promote and protect the public health, safety and general welfare.

The proposed amendment advances many of the Goals, Objectives, and Policies of the City's Comprehensive Plan, and is consistent with the concurrent request to amend the Zoning Atlas Designation of the site, as the site fronts the major roadway corridor of US Highway 1, providing encouragement of commercial activities with higher intensity near major intersections. This request furthers Objective 1.10 to promote economic growth through commercial and industrial development to create employment opportunities and increase the City's tax and economic base. This objective advanced through implementation of Policy 1.10.2 to ensure that the FLU Map allocates sufficient lands for commercial and industrial purposes to serve future growth needs of the City. The applicant seeks to increase the availability of general commercial land adjacent to the US Highway 1, accessible to mainland and island development.

The proposed amendment does not incorporate provision of a land use transition from intense commercial uses, desired along US Highway, to reduced development intensity towards established residential development and active parklands. Staff is advancing the integration of Neighborhood Commercial segment, at the far west end of the property, to provide an appropriate transition to better assimilate with established uses adjacent. This step down from general commercial activities to neighborhood commercial would embrace the provision of lower intensity commercial developments intended to serve surrounding neighborhoods and residential areas, and compliment the overall desire of the development to provide a notable commercial hub. Delineation of this recommendation is provided via Figure 2, which identifies a potential transition point, based upon surrounding uses.



Figure 2

Additionally, the future development should advance City Comprehensive Plan Objective 7.2, and policy 7.2.4 by integrating a proportionate amount of open space and recreation area to be provided by both private enterprise and public agencies by consideration of partnership that may include mechanisms such as minor land dedications, in favor of recreation and open space credits, and/or transfer of development rights. Design of a future development should embrace the surrounding uses, providing appropriate transition to the adjacent parklands and residential housing, augmenting the introduction of commercial activities.

The land use amendment, whether adopted as presented or the recommended transition, should not have adverse an effect on the ability of the city to satisfy land and water use needs, meet transportation demands, and provide community facilities and services. The presented amendment promotes and protects the public health, safety and general welfare through the increased variety and access to goods and services, relying upon design of future development evolve in a manner than minimizes impacts to neighboring residential and recreational districts. The proposed adjustment to the request, seeks to merge land use and zoning safe guards to mandate an appropriate transition to the adjacent uses and districts.

Technical Review Committee:

All affected departments have reviewed and approved the proposed requests. No significant impacts to public facilities are immediately expected by the proposed amendment. Traffic impacts will be assessed further at the time of development application to determine any demand for transportation improvements to abutting roadways and intersections. Review comments provided by the Technical Review Committee are provided for further review.

Staff Recommendation:

The proposed Future Land Use amendment meets the criteria specified in Section 22-131 of the City Code, with minor exception, and promotes and protects the public health, safety and general welfare; therefore Staff recommends approval of the proposed amendment with guidance that the western three hundred and fifty (350) feet of the subject site is advanced with a Neighborhood Commercial (NC) designation, as presented by staff, in Figure 2, based upon improved consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and assimilation with the surrounding districts.